

To the Chairman and Members of the Barnard Castle Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of submitting my Report on the health and sanitary conditions of the Barnard Castle Rural District for the year 1907.

For comparative purposes I have divided the district into three sub-districts. I have retained the Middleton District as it formerly existed; and by grouping the Parishes of the Staindrop and Barnard Castle Districts in a fresh combination, I have formed two sub-districts that I have named North and South Staindrop.

North Staindrop includes the Parishes of Cockfield, Woodland, Langleydale, Wackerfield, Morton Tinmouth, Hilton, Raby and Keverston, and Ingleton.

South Staindrop includes the Parishes of Staindrop, Gainford, Headlam, Langton, Winston, Cleatlam, Whorlton, Westwick, Marwood and Streatlam, with Stainton.

The chief industries of each District being:—Middleton—agriculture, lead-mining, and quarrying lime and whinstone. North Staindrop—Coal mining and agriculture, chiefly pasture land. South Staindrop—Agriculture, both tillage and pasture.

Below I give in tabular form the population of the whole District, with numbers of deaths and births, also birth, death, and infantile mortality rates.

	Population	Births	Birth rate	Deaths	Death rate	Deaths under I year	Infantile mortality rate
Middleton	3,587	64	17·8	60	16·7	11	171·8
North Staindrop	3,907	118	30·2	58	14·8	14	118·6
South Staindrop	4,166	94	22·5	60	14·4	11	117·0
Totals for Whole District	11,660	276	23·6	178	15·2	36	130·4
County Rates	—	—	34·8	—	17·0	—	136·0

Included amongst the above total of deaths are seven deaths which occurred in public institutions outside the district. The deaths of five persons belonging to Middleton occurred, four in the Workhouse and one in the Asylum. Two deaths of persons belonging to North Staindrop occurred in the Workhouse.

Middleton compares very unfavourably with the other Districts and with the county in the birth and infantile mortality rates. The birth-rate is very low, being nearly half that of the county. The infantile mortality-rate is very high, being much in excess of the county rate. The birth-rate of North Staindrop is high compared with the rest of the District, and approaches closely that of the county.

Of the deaths occurring in the District thirty-six died under 1 year, eleven between 1·5 years, three between 5·15, six between 15·25, sixty-one between 25·65, and fifty-four 65 years and upwards.

In North Staindrop ten died between 70·80 years, and three over 80, the oldest being 91.

In South Staindrop ten died between 70·80 years, and four over 80, the oldest being 93.

In Middleton nine died between 70·80 years, and four over 80, the oldest being 87.

Infant Mortality.—I tabulate below the infantile deaths and their causes.

	Middleton	North Staindrop	South Staindrop	Middleton	North Staindrop	South Staindrop
Preventable Deaths:				Unpreventable Deaths:		
Gastro-enteritis	2	—	—	Premature Birth	1	3
Gastritis	—	1	—	Congenital Defects	2	2
Debility	—	3	—	Debility from Birth	3	3
Convulsions	—	2	—	Hamatemesis	1	—
Bronchitis	—	—	1	Injury at Birth	—	—
Pneumonia	1	—	—			
Measles	—	—	1			
	3	6	2		7	8
						9

Of the Preventable Deaths, I am inclined to ascribe those occurring from Gastro-enteritis, Gastritis, Debility, and Convulsions to improper food, and those from Bronchitis, Phenmonia, and Measles to thoughtless exposure.

Of the Unpreventable Deaths eleven were caused by Debility from birth, four dying in the first, three in the second, two in the third, and two in the fourth week from birth. Six were caused by Premature Birth, five in the first week and one in the third week. Three died from Congenital Defects, two in the first week and one in the second week. One died from Injury at Birth in the first week. Altogether there were 12 deaths in the first, four in the second, three in the third, and two in the fourth week.

As regards the feeding of infants there is an increasing tendency amongst women of all classes to shirk the duties of motherhood, and to hand over their children to all the attendant risks of artificial feeding. There can be no improvement in the infantile death-rate until such mothers are induced to resume the old-fashioned but natural nursing, or if that is impossible owing to ill health or absence of milk, then they should be instructed in the proper feeding and care of their babies.

In my experience another cause of high infantile death-rate is the too frequent child bearing of women in the poorer classes. The wife of the poor working-man in such circumstances is over-worked in body, and is worried in mind by the care of an increasing family. She cannot get sufficient rest to preserve her health, nor proper food to maintain her strength, which is also probably reduced by over-lactation. Such conditions in the mother account for too many, if not all, of the deaths from Premature Birth, Congenital Defects, and those debilitated children who are brought into the world defective in mind and body, without resisting power, are foredoomed to death.

To remedy this state of things of course necessitates the proper care of the mother during pregnancy. The time may come when the prolific women will be looked upon as a valuable property by the State, and the same care that is now bestowed upon the breeding of the lower animals may then be carried out in encouraging the breeding of a perfect and healthy child.

Zymotic Death-rate.—Seven deaths from Measles, giving a death-rate of 0·60, county death-rate being 1·98.

Notification of Infectious Diseases.—Fifty-two cases were notified. Eighteen cases of Diphtheria, fifteen of Scarlet Fever, two of Enteric Fever, one of Puerperal Fever, and sixteen of Erysipelas. There were sixteen notifications from Middleton, twenty-three from North Staindrop, and thirteen from South Staindrop.

In these cases I visited the residences of the patients and gave instruction for the isolation of those affected, and also for the proper disinfection of the premises. I recommended the Council to supply the poorer classes of people with disinfectants. This has been kindly consented to by the Council. I have generally been accompanied by Mr. Brown in these visits, and with him I have taken the opportunity of inspecting not only the infected houses, but also those in the neighbourhood. In this way any defects found in structure, in closets, ash pits, or water supply were noted down for future consideration.

Small-pox.—No cases occurred in the District.

Enteric Fever.—Two cases were notified, one at Woodland, and one at Gainford. I could not trace the origin in either case. Both patients were thoroughly isolated, and no further cases occurred.

Diphtheria.—Eighteen cases were notified, five in the Middleton, three in the North Staindrop, and ten in the South Staindrop Districts. Only three cases occurred in the first seven months of the year, and fifteen in the next five months. During the autumn sore throats were prevalent, especially in the South Staindrop District, and I have no doubt that some of those throats were diphtheritic, and were the source of spreading the disease. Most of the cases were very mild, which is probably due to the general use of anti-diphtheritic serum in the early stages. The mildness of the attacks has had one bad effect on the public. They are not so careful in completely isolating the patients, and consequently I reported one case to the Council of a man who exposed his child during the convalescent stage. I asked for permission to prosecute, but a narrow majority passed a resolution to strongly censure him.

Scarlet Fever.—Fifteen cases were notified, seven in the first half, and eight in the latter half of the year. Two cases occurred in Middleton in January and August. Thirteen cases occurred in North Staindrop, scattered over the District, one in March, two in May, three in June, three in September, three in October, and one in November. In no case did the disease spread in the immediate neighbourhood of the starting point. All the cases were of a very mild type.

Erysipelas.—Sixteen cases were notified, eight in the Middleton, six in the North Staindrop, and two in the South Staindrop Districts.

Measles.—Measles were very prevalent in the autumn, nearly every part of the District being affected. I recommended the closure of the schools at Stainton, Cockfield, Woodland, Eggleston, Middleton, and Newbiggin.

Whooping Cough.—Was not prevalent.

Diarrhœa.—Was not common. Only one death was attributed to it.

Phthisis.—There were nine deaths from Phthisis, two in the Middleton; four in the North Staindrop, and three in the South Staindrop Districts, giving a death-rate of 0·77 for the whole District.

Other Tubercular Diseases.—From other Tubercular Diseases there were five deaths: three in the Middleton and two in the North Staindrop District, giving a death-rate of 0·42 for the whole district. Both of these death-rates compare favourably with those of the county rate, 0·97 and 0·80 respectively.

Water Supply.—The public supplies at Woodland and Cockfield have been ample for domestic purposes during the year. At Cockfield occasionally there has been slight inconvenience which has been caused by the Colliery Workings interfering with the main pipe. To remedy this, one-hundred-and-fifty yards of the main has been relaid.

At Newbiggin work is proceeding which will, when completed, provide the whole village with a good, wholesome and sufficient supply of water.

Staindrop Village public pumps (two) have been kept in good order and the supply of water therefrom has been abundant. I have analysed two samples of water from the well used by the inhabitants of Winston Lane and from the Beck Side spout, and found them suitable for all domestic purposes. Action has been taken to close a well at Moor Lane, where the water on analysis has been found badly polluted.

Circulars have been sent to the owners of over one hundred houses which are not situated within a reasonable distance of a proper supply of water, requesting them to provide their properties with a sufficient and wholesome supply. Up to the present time only a few of the owners have made arrangements to comply with this request.

Ingleton Village—I have analysed samples of water from the public pumps here, and reported that the water from the Town Pump and Dog-lope Pump were seriously polluted and unfit for domestic purposes. Notices have been placed on each of these pumps warning the people of the village not to use water therefrom. The sample from the West Well was found only fairly satisfactory by me. This water however has since been analysed by the county analyst and certified by him to be a good and wholesome water. I may add that the county analyst in his Report on the condition of the Town Pump water, confirmed the analysis made by me.

Cleatlam Village.—This village, containing seventeen dwellings, has been provided by the owner, Lord Strathmore, with a supply of water from the Tees Valley Water Board's main, and taps have been placed in each house. Previously the supply was from a well a considerable distance from the houses. Two deaths from Diphtheria occurred in a house in this village, and as the occupants of the house were using the water from a pump in the yard, I suspected from the position of the pump that the water was impure. On analysis I found this water very badly polluted. I am glad to say that the pump is now dismantled.

At Middleton the inconvenience caused by deficiency in the supply has been less than in previous years. The supply here will not be completely satisfactory till all the old earthenware pipes are replaced by iron pipes. I recommend that the replacing of these old pipes be proceeded with as soon as circumstances will allow.

At my request the Council kindly supplied me with one of Burroughs, Wellcome and Company's Water Analysis Cases. I have analysed many samples of water from various parts of the District. I find the apparatus a great help and very trustworthy, my analysis on several occasions being confirmed by that of the county analyst.

Dwelling-houses.—Nine new dwelling-houses were erected during the year. After notices were served upon the owners, structural defects at twenty-seven houses have been remedied in the following manner—one house was partly rebuilt, ceilings, roofs, and walls were repaired, dry areas were provided to prevent and remedy dampness of walls and floors where the surface of the adjoining ground was above the level of floors. Defective and damp floors were replaced by cement concrete or wooden floors. Defective roof-guttering, eaves, spouting, and downpipes were remedied. Windows were made to open, and provision made for better ventilation.

One house at Winston, which was closed in 1906, owing to its insanitary condition, has been put into order by the Colliery Company, and is now re-occupied.

Defects in drainage at forty-nine houses have been dealt with and made good, and defective yard paving at two houses has been relaid with cement concrete. At several houses nuisances have been abated by having paving made good around the sinks.

Houses Without Through Ventilation.—A large proportion of these houses have only two rooms, and are occupied by one or two persons. Steps have been taken to improve the ventilation by making the windows open top and bottom, and where the bedroom fireplaces have been stopped up, by the removal of these obstructions. The open spaces about the houses are extensive and sufficient. In many cases the cleanliness of the surroundings have been improved by the substitution of water and ash closets for midden privies. I have not found any overcrowding. I have made special enquiry as to the health of the occupants of these houses, and find that it differs in no way from their neighbours.

Excrement Disposal and Removal.—With the exception of Cockfield and Woodland where the scavenging is carried out by the local authorities and the colliery company respectively, the removal of excrement is done in a casual and unsatisfactory manner. During my inspections I have seen privies and ash-pits which are allowed to become undesirably full and offensive, and consequently were in a very insanitary condition. The chief excuse for the non-removal of these accumulations was, that it did not always suit the farmers to lead them on to their lands. I find that whilst farmers are willing enough to empty the old-fashioned midden privies, they are not so eager to remove the refuse from ash-closets, because the latter is not so useful for manurial purposes.

In recommending the substitution of ash-closets and occasionally the pail system for the midden privies, I look upon public scavenging as a necessary accessory to these changes, because without it ash-closets and pails are not cleansed so frequently as they ought to be. I therefore again strongly advise the Council to adopt public scavenging in the more thickly populous parts of the district.

In forty-five cases notices had to be served to abate nuisances caused by the accumulation of ashes, house refuse, manure, and rubbish.

Thirty-eight nuisances caused by insanitary conveniences were abated after written notices were served on the owners.

At sixty-four houses midden privies have been replaced by either small ash-closets or water closets.

A good many midden privies and open ash-pits still remain. These are having attention.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.—At Middleton a new sewer has been put in so as to effectually drain Wesley Terrace Chapel, Terrace, Nelson Row, and the Primitive Methodist Property.

Ingleton village has been provided with new sewage disposal works, to deal with the sewage from the west end of the village, two tanks being provided to work alternately, and arranged so that the sewage is treated by land irrigation, in a plot of land leased at a small annual rent from Lord Barnard.

The west end of Hilton village has been sewered and drained by Lord Barnard.

The various sewage works and sewers throughout the District have been kept and maintained in good order.

Dairies and Cow-sheds.—There are twenty-nine registered milk-sellers in the district. Most of these only keep one or two cows and sell milk to neighbours. There are a few who make the trade of milk-selling their chief business, and daily send a quantity of milk out of the district by rail.

A copy of the regulations relating to Dairies, Cow-sheds, and Milk-shops, which came into force in the District on 1st February, 1907, has been delivered to each milk-seller, and the Dairies and Cow-sheds are periodically inspected by myself and Mr. Brown.

Two milk-shops have been altered, and in five cow-sheds defects were remedied. Two cow-sheds were re-built.

During my inspections of dairies and cow-sheds, I found that most of them were defective in light, ventilation, and in condition of floors. Many of them were very dirty both inside and out. In the latter case it was impossible to keep the cows clean when watering them owing to the large accumulations of manure in the adjacent yards.

To remedy this I have recommended the abolition of such manure heaps, the paving and draining of the yards, and the daily removal of the dung to a suitable distance from the cowsheds.



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Slaughter-houses.—This bye-law came into force about the middle of 1907, and with Mr. Brown I have inspected the following three at Middleton, one at Foggarthwaite, one at Woodland, two at Cockfield, two at Staindrop, and two at Gainford. I found none of them meeting the requirements of the Local Government Board as laid down in the rules of the model bye-laws. In my special report of above, I have recommended that no licenses be granted until the defects pointed out in each case be made good. I beg to remind the Council that the objects of the bye-law is shown in clause one "To prevent cruelty in the slaughter-houses, and to keep them in a cleanly and proper state." To do this efficiently, it is necessary that my recommendations be carried out. I am glad to inform you of the two slaughter-houses in Middleton, one has already remedied in a satisfactory manner all defects, and the other has nearly completed the necessary alterations. One house at Cockfield has also complied, and I hope that the others will follow suit as soon as the weather permits. I have condemned one house at Middleton, and one at Gainford. Three slaughter-houses, one at Staindrop, one at Winston, and one at Cockfield only need registering, having been in use and occupation prior to 1875.

Schools.—The public elementary schools at Whorlton, Staindrop, Gainford, Ingleton, Eggleston, Middleton, Forest and Newbiggin, have all been improved as regards ventilation of the rooms, and the provision of better sanitary conveniences.

Isolation Hospital and Disinfection.—Four patients have been treated in the hospital during the year. Three suffering from Diphtheria, all these were visitors in the District who brought the disease with them. One case of Scarlet Fever was also isolated. The early removal of these cases to the hospital prevented any further spread of the infection.

A disinfecting apparatus has been provided, which enables bedding and clothing to be more effectually disinfected.

An electric bell has been fixed in the caretaker's cottage with means of communication from each ward and the nurse's duty room. This is a great advantage and convenience.

All houses where infectious disease occurred were disinfected, and three schools at Cockfield were fumigated.

Factories and Workshops.—Fourteen factories and thirty-eight workshops have been inspected, and nothing found requiring action to be taken, except in a few cases failure to post up abstract of Factory Act, which were duly reported to the Inspector of Factories.

Common Lodging-Houses.—I have inspected these at Middleton and Staindrop, and found them in a satisfactory condition.

Nuisances.—Total number of nuisances abated after notice was one-hundred-and-ninety-six. It was only necessary to serve eleven statutory notices, which shows that the majority of property-owners in the District are ready to comply with the requirements of the Law. Numerous sanitary improvements are carried out merely by a suggestion to the responsible persons.

The advice of myself and Mr. Brown is continually sought by property owners anxious to ensure their property being put into a sanitary condition.

In company with Mr. Brown I have made several systematic inspections in the various divisions of the District.

My duty, that of continual fault-finding, is a very unpleasant but necessary task. I therefore beg to express my thanks to those property-owners and agents who have so readily complied with my suggestions for the improvement of their property, although in doing so I may have put them to considerable expense.

I also beg to thank the Council for the staunch manner they have supported my efforts to perform my duties satisfactorily.

I remain,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

JAMES C. NELIGAN.

2nd March, 1908.

